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The post-positive particle -to in the tales from Novgorod region.

The collection of Russian tales from Novgorod region was assembled and published initially at the time about 1920. Later on, the collection was taken out to Paris and many years later returned to Russia, where it was republished in 1993 [Serova 1993]. It consists of 11 tales, collected in Tikhvinsky, Borovichsky and Ustyuzhensky uyezds of government of Novgorod (figure 1) and comprises 14089 tokens. This collection of tales is going to be a part of a TITUS database and will be available for detailed study by all interested linguists.

This article is devoted to one of the post-positive particles which is known to be used in Russian to emphasize an arbitrary word. The particle -to and its variants were found to be very frequent especially in North Russian dialects [Trubinskij 1970, Panzer 1984, Uzdinskaja 1996 etc.]. Furthermore the function of post-positive particle can vary and according to observation of [Trubinskij 1984] one might distinguish: the emphatic function, function of definite article, hypotactic and quasi-conjunction function.

The article presents for the first time a corpus driven study of the distribution of post-positive particle -to (and its far less frequent variants -ot, -ta, -tu, -te) in “Nov gordskiye skazki” due to the attached part of speech as well as the case and number. The tales were divided into four groups according to occurrences of -to and its variants. Some tales were compared with the available tales written in literary Russian language in order to analyze the function of post-positive particles.

Such approach of lexical data treatment allowed us to get new findings:

1. As corpus based analysis of the material of “Nov gordskiye skazki” showed, the postpositive -to is not only very frequent, but it is the most frequent word of a whole corpus leaving behind such conjunctions as и, а, да.
2. Besides it was shown, when the post-positive particle occurs but also when it doesn’t. So, from one side, the article includes the examples when the post-positive particle can occur with thematic and rhematic elements. From the other side, we observe the absence of the post-positive particle -to by mentioning of the protagonist for the first time (figure 2, line 1) and the consequent marking in other occurrences (figure 2, lines 2, 3, 4, 5, 7), which represent the contextual deixis and the function of a definite article:

![Concordance of a word “бабка” in the tale “Melenka-molodilka” (in AntConc program).](image)

Furthermore, there is the absence of the post-positive particle -to in the cases of addressing expressed by common nouns (nomen appellativum) (f. ex. in figure 2, line 6). Also, the post-positive particles rarely occur with proper nouns (nomen proprium). It means that the additional emphasis with the post-positive particle is in these cases superfluous.

References:

8. Uzdinskaja, E. V., 1996, Častica “-to” v russkix dialektax i v razgovornoj reči (funkcional'nyj aspekt), Avtoreferat diss. kand. fil. nauk, Saratov.
9. TITUS: http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de